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**We are in our third year of drought. It is bad now and could get worse.**

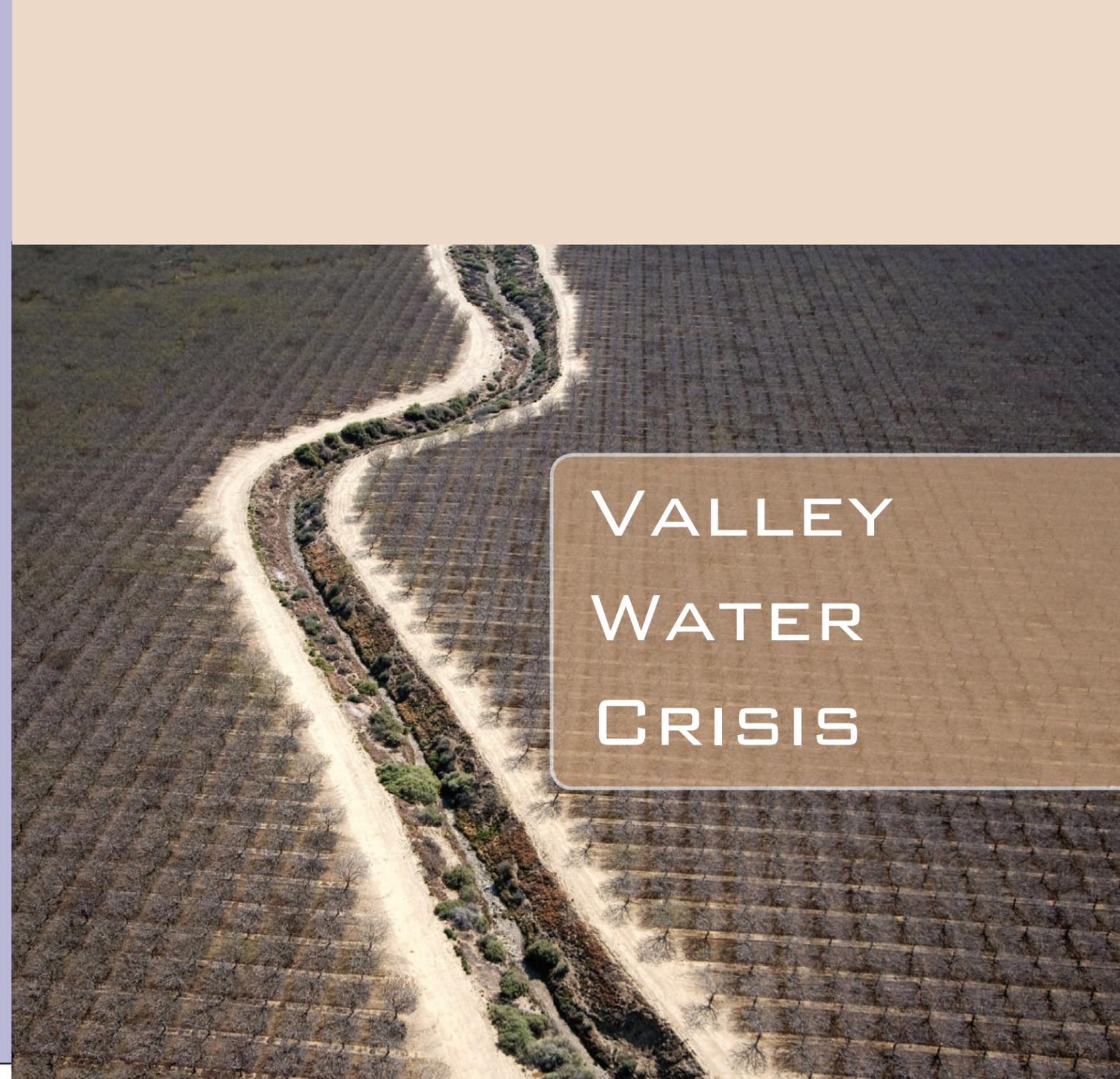
That means less water for everyone – in the Valley and in other parts of California.

But government water allocation decisions that fail to balance social, economic and environmental concerns are compounding the problem for us.

This “regulatory drought” on top of three years of natural drought conditions is slamming our local economy. You can see it in the parched fields...the dead almond trees...the food lines for farmworkers thrown out of work...and many other ways.

That’s why I am doing everything I can to draw the attention of Congress and the Administration to the problem and to get state and federal agencies to explore every option for getting more reliable water supplies for the Valley.

A lot is at stake. We cannot afford to lose this fight.



**VALLEY WATER CRISIS**

**A Report by Congressman Jim Costa**

M.C.  
PRSRT STD

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# THE VALLEY'S FIGHT FOR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL

## A Report by Congressman Jim Costa

*A series of government decisions is taking water away from the Valley.*

*It is commonly portrayed as a fight between farmers and fish; agribusiness versus single-minded environmentalists. But here in the Valley, it is actually a fight for our way of life.*

*The repeated water cutbacks hurt farmers, farmworkers and their families. They also attack the foundation of our Valley economy where so many local jobs and businesses depend in some way on agriculture's survival.*

*Jim Costa has always fought for the Valley economy. Part of that fight now involves working to draw attention to the widespread human impact of Valley water cutbacks and to urge decision-makers to work even harder at exploring every workable option for getting us more water.*

*At his urging, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and other federal officials came to a local Town Hall meeting on the drought. Costa feels that seeing the impact of federal water decisions first hand will make officials more responsive.*

*"This Administration and Congress must work together if we are going to solve these short term and long term challenges for our Valley's water needs," Costa says.*

### IMPACT ON THE VALLEY

It is a brutal combination – waves of water cutbacks, one after another, as if we were not already in a third consecutive year of drought.

This is taking a huge financial toll on the Valley, including the loss of thousands of jobs.

The first to suffer are farmers who can't plant and the farmworkers who can't find work during normally high-employment months.

But it won't stop there. Withholding water from households, businesses and farmers could easily have a ripple effect that stalls economic recovery and puts families throughout the Valley in jeopardy.

### ACTIVELY INVOLVED

A leader for safe, clean, reliable Valley water supplies – both for residential consumers and businesses – Costa has been actively involved in the fight on many levels for more than 30 years.

A third generation Valley farmer, he worked to make sure that changes in the federal Farm Bill treated the Valley fairly.

And last June, he warned the Bush Administration about the ongoing impact of the drought and pushed them to streamline the water transfer process and work with the State Water Project to get more water to the Valley.



*Jim Costa speaks to constituents on the need for changes in Congressional water policy regarding both short and long term challenges.*

### REGULATORY DROUGHT

This February, he told Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, "On top of the driest conditions on record, the water supply outlook is further exacerbated by the 'regulatory drought' that has resulted from regulatory actions."

The letter went on to say, "The Endangered Species Act, in particular, has proven to be a regulatory hammer preventing water conveyance, transfers and storage..."

### RESTORING THE BALANCE

First and foremost, Costa believes water policy must reflect a balance between the preservation of species and human needs.

He knows there are many causes for the decline of various local fish populations and that more thoughtful, scientifically-proven government policies could help.

But, he feels that times of natural disasters and emergencies, like the three-year drought draining our local economy and straining family budgets, is the wrong time for government-mandated water cutbacks.

## Continuing the Fight

Jim is working with state and federal agencies to make it easier to transfer available water supplies from willing sellers to willing buyers in the Valley.

He initiated an effort with the US Department of Interior to identify and fund "shovel-ready" drought-related projects that could qualify for economic stimulus funds and produce more water immediately.

He is calling for earlier disclosure of federal water rescheduling guidelines to give farmers a better chance to make crop decisions and arrange financing.

Costa is also engaged in efforts to promote funding and construction of the Two Gates and the Inter-tie projects among other ideas that could address environmental concerns while also providing more reliable water supplies.

And he is working to help shape long range infrastructure development to meet not only the present needs of all regions, but future needs in particular.

### BOTTOM LINE

Costa is working to make sure federal officials understand we are living on borrowed time. Our water system, designed to serve 20 million people, cannot continue to take care of a growing population already exceeding 38 million, especially in light of the drought and regulatory actions.

We need more water now, but Costa is also fighting for a permanent fix to California's broken plumbing system.

To learn more about what I am doing about water issues, go to my Congressional website at <http://www.costa.house.gov> and click on "Drought Relief"